

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

Testimony in support of: [SB 1021: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY WORKING GROUP.](#)

March 10, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on behalf of the University of Hartford concerning SB 1021.

The University of Hartford's College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture (CETA) is nationally regarded for educating and preparing excellent engineers and professionals, most of whom start careers in Connecticut's STEM industries. Our strong record of producing high-quality professionals, combined with successful and multifaceted industry partnerships, allows our graduates to easily integrate into the state's workforce.

Real-life work experiences are a cornerstone of CETA's programs and our students benefit greatly by building relationships with industry specialists while completing their degrees. Many work with United Technologies Research Center engineers in the University's turbomachinery lab; intern with the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technologies (CCAT) or with the 250+ high-tech and aerospace companies through the Connecticut Technology Council (CTC). Partner companies—Eversource, Carrier, Otis, Pratt & Whitney, Stanley Black & Decker, Sikorsky, Loctite Corporation (Henkel KGaA), Westinghouse Electric, and many others—work alongside students and faculty to develop cross-discipline solutions and product challenges. These companies preview talent and form connections with students as they approach graduation.

The Hursey Center, our new facility opening in Fall of 2021, will offer expanded state-of-the-art laboratories in robotics, manufacturing, automation, internet of things, cyber security and computer science, as well as additional classrooms and a makerspace. It will also house select health sciences programs, creating new opportunities for collaboration and innovation. Additionally, with the guidance and support of our partners, a new state-of-the-art automation lab will be added to existing academic space in spring of 2021. This facility will also support training opportunities for in-state engineering professionals, such as the hundreds of Pratt & Whitney engineers that currently take a four-week

manufacturing metrology training certificate with us. We hope to offer an Industry 4.0 certificate in the near future.

Working together, we anticipate the new facilities will have a positive impact on the numerous supply chains within the State of Connecticut, while helping the State meet the increasing demand for engineers in the workforce.

Separate but related, and as you may be aware, Connecticut is challenged by the exodus of students to other states upon graduation. Research for the Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth notes that only 32 percent of graduates from Connecticut colleges and universities stay in the state after graduation, which pales in comparison to graduate retention rates in neighboring states (New York, 54 percent; Massachusetts, 46 percent). University of Hartford graduates, however, exceed these averages. It is also worth noting that Connecticut trails its neighbors in the production of STEM graduates, ranking 33rd in graduates per capita behind Massachusetts (2nd), New York (17th), and New Hampshire (24th).

To summarize, the synergy that takes place within the region's manufacturing industries is powerful and necessary. With additional resources and structure, such as the formation of a formal working group as proposed in SB 1021, these coordinate and prioritized efforts can only benefit our workforce and the State.

Respectfully Submitted,

Hisham Alnajjar
Dean, College of Engineering, Technology and Architecture
University of Hartford